This focus 9 commission of Copion,

Movember 14, 1962

The Under Socretary.

THROUGHE 3/5

FROM IKR - Roger Hilsenn

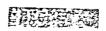
SUPJECT: In Principle Carer: Probable Coviet Mativations in Payloying Strategic Largiles to Caba

- 1. The Soviet attempt to deploy MREFs and IRPMs in Cuba remains a startling venture: The Soviets had never unfertairen foreign deployments of such weapons before: when they chome to do so they picked the lengt afable and reliable of their engociates as the host country, one, mirenver, with extremely insecure lines of communication. Furthermore, Cuba's proximity to the US rada the deployment clearly provocative.
- 2. The Soviet decision could thus hardly have been a friction one. Her does a more Cuban request for protection (the official Soviet explanation) mean like on vadequate explanation.
- 3. The tasic impulse leading the Sovieta to ecosider the move probably sterred from developments in the US-Soviet strategic relationship thelve to eighteen reaths ago. Ab some time in that period, the forteto became areae that the US had changed its view of the military belance, i.m., that the producation of a significant Soviet appearantly in 1000a was giving way to a recognition that, if anything, a Trinsile gap" existed in favor of the US rather than vice-versa. Combines with this Soviet agareness that the US had revises its estimate of the numerical balance, it went nime have dawned on the Soviet leaders that their sall of correct has been penatrated, that the location of their strategie striking power was generally known to the US and that in connequence the invulnerability which scenecy had conferred on the early-generation Soviet missile force was fact disspearing.
- A. Thesa resilentions undoubtedly lead the Saviet leaders to reconsider their misalla programa and epolanoted them once again with soute problems of resource allocation.

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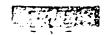
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- 5. In this situation, Noncow found itemic with a new ally in Ould. Almost containly the Naviet leaders but nony singletings start Controlled about the way he lad read birself into the Commiss come. But if he could be associational and built up, he would represent a potentially valuable bridgeless in the leaters becomes -- a tride-head both of revolution and possibly of physical Soviet accom-
- 6. The possibility that Cuba might serve in some fashion to redress the minategic equation, at least in some measure, must thus have exercised increasing attraction in Soviet minds. And Canter himself probably pushed the Soviets further along in these reflections as with mounting insistence be asked for atlitudy assistance and showed himself willing to become a host to the Soviets.
- 7. The Soviets undoubtedly considered the ricks: but the vistes opened by the accessful transformation of fublishes & Soviet strategic lane were lush and full of profine.
- -- There were (a) the purely military pain of ining able to bring virtually all of the US and large parts of intin America to be Soviet nuclear fire -- not enough, it is true, to rewrre the military labore but sufficient, numbicless, to add substantial reject to a Soviet sinter, to release Soviet 1017s and substantial-lounded miralies for other missions, and to commissate US defendive as well as offensive problems.
- -- There were () the breader strategie galus flori a from a domination of Auviet ability to secondish with a fill quantum less right to the dominates of the 10 minutes.
  - -- There was (a) the new attendity conference on Coules political-diplomatic initiatives who a side who went, not least with respect to Inclin.
  - -- And finally those was (d) the specific immed in latin America where, in the Soviet wies at least, there would be bount to be a charp decline in NO influence and polar, increasing flictofilm with non-elignment and, in time, other regimes lefting to lineary for supplet and accomistion
  - E. Meanwhile, drawlin new mineile building and chreloprental project clased on the agenda by the discoppearance of the intention and and by the constructor of Covict peclusics, might be postposed on, at least, here less drautics.



- 9. When the decision to attoopt the nove organization the Soviet mind is difficult to determine. In the rates of 1959, at any rate, France clearly leaded to build up the air and constal defendes of Ciba bith in order to accome it, at least relatively, against US stinck and to test US reactions. By mid or late succes, the Soviets ray well have felt able to make their big nove and to set in train the massive legistic apparatus required and the proparation of the ground in Cuba.
- 10. What US renction did the flavieth expent? In the first place, it must be accounted that Pascov expected that at some joint the US would discover what was afast -- probably before all missiles were operational. (In view of the probable operational date of the India contine in precedent it must be assumed as virtually centain that Mascow expected to be discovered well before the entire force was ready, although the Soviets of course would have preferred to face the NG with an accomplished feet.)
- 11. Once discovered, the Soviets probably calculated that four broad US responses could occur:
- -- (a) protests, complaints in the UR but, finally sequioscence;
- -- (b) an effort to offer an attractive bargain involving parts of the US everense have abrunture;
- -- (c) application of limited force combined with a willingness to reguliate a represently (from the Soulet elect point an indifferent) bargain:
- -- (d) application of major force ngainst the missiles and/or Cuba as a whole.
- 12. (a) and (b) above were almost certainly the sespunces considered most likely by the Soviets. Ned they
  thought either (c) or (d) probable it would seem extrerely
  doubtful that they would have undertaken the venture to the
  first place became (teking response (d)) they must have
  recognized that they could pelither billiarily personne who
  or the missile sites against examive to attack, nor keep of a
  the sea and air leass in the face of a to blockede, nor (t) to
  a general war and hope to win. It has specifies been succeeded
  that the Soviets would have been villing to thede outer one to
  obloquy which the US would earn were it to levels out crosh
  Cubs. In an extreme case, the Soviets might fine is necessary





to accept such a incle; but they would headly bear a course of sition on the expectation. To the Sivieta, at any office territory remains a clic valuable term tion such the end of the inclusion. Indicate the extracely doubtful (taking riserance (c) that the Soviets would have taken the frauche and risk of alreing simplified in Cuba lad they thought the most likely outered was that they would have to pull them out again for slight excepansation.

13. Separation. From in the first instance of militarystratable consideralities, the minister nave into Cuba offered
to the Caviets glittering projects in the strategie, political
and paperalizated realizations. They probably thought they
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could get away with the action on would at least be able to
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military position. They probably considered leas (awarable
outcome and must always have been clear that they could
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faced -- and they miscalculated.



TO: The Under Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: INR - Roger Hilsman

SUBJECT: Talking Paper: Probable Soviet Motivations in Deploying Strategic Missiles to Cuba

- 1. The Soviet attempt to deploy MRBMs and IRBMS in Cuba remains a startling venture: The Soviets had never undertaken foreign deployments of such weapons before; when they chose to do so they picked the least stable and reliable of their associates as the host country, one, moreover, with extremely insecure lines of communication. Futhermore, Cuba's proximity to the US made the deployment clearly provocative.
- 2. The Soviet decision could thus hardly have been a frivolous one. Nor does a mere Cuban request for protection (the official Soviet explanation) seem like an adequate explanation.
- 3. The basic impulse leading the Soviets to consider the move probably stemmed from developments in the US-Soviet strategic relationship twelve to eighteen months ago. At some time in that period, the Soviets became aware that the U.S. had changed its view of the military balance, i.e. that the presumption of a significant Soviet superiority in ICBMs was giving way to a recognition that, if anything, a missile gap existed in favor of the US rather than viceversa. Combined with this Soviet awareness that the US had revised its estimate of the numerical balance, it must also have dawned on the Soviet leaders that their wall of secrecy had been renetrated, that the location of their strategic striking power was generally known to the US and that in consequence the invulnerability which secrecy had conferred on the early-generation Soviet missile force was fast disappearing.
- 4. These realizations undoubtedly led the Soviet leaders to reconsider their missile programs and confronted them once again with acute problems of resource allocation.

- 5. In this situation, Moscow found itself with a new ally in Cuba. Almost certainly the Soviet leaders had many misgivings about Castro and about the way he had read himself into the Communist camp. But if he could be maintained and built-up, he would represent a potentially valuable bridge-head in the Western hemisphere -- a bridge-head both of revolution and possibly of physical Soviet power.
- 6. The possibility that Cuba might serve in some fashion to redress the strategic equation, at least in some measure, must thus have exercised increasing attraction in Soviet minds. And Castro himself probably pushed the Soviets further along in these reflections as with mounting insistance he asked for military assistance and showed himself willing to become a host to the Soviets.
- 7. The Soviets undoubtedly considered the risks; but the vistas opened by the successful transformation of Cuba into a Soviet strategic base were lisk and full of promise.
- -- There was (a) the purely military gain of being able to bring virtually all of the US and large parts of Latin America under Soviet nuclear fire -- not enough, it is true, to reverse the military balance, but sufficient, nonetheless, to add substantial weight to a Soviet strike, to release Soviet ICBMs and submarine-launched missiles for other missions, and to complicate US defensive as well as offensive problems.
- -- There were (b) the broader strategic gains flowing from a demonstration of Soviet ability to accomplish such a quantum leap right to the doorstep of the US metropole.
- -- There was (c) the new strength conferred on Soviet political-diplomatic initiatives vis-a-vis the West, not least with respect to Berlin.
- -- And finally there was (c) the specific impact in Latin America where, in the Soviet view at least, these would be bound to be a sharp decline in US influence and power, increasing flirtation with non-alignment and, in time, other regimes looking to Moscow for support and association.
- 8. Meanwhile, drastic new missile building and developmental programs placed on the agend, by the dissapearance of the missile gap and by the puncturing of Soviet seclusion, might be postponed or, at least, kept less trastic.

- 9. When the decision to attempt the move crystallized in the Soviet mind is difficult to determine. In the spring of 1962, at any rate, Moscow clearly decided to build up the air and coastal defenses of Cuba both in order to secure it, at least relatively, against US attack and to test US reactions. By mid or late summer, the Soviets may well have felt able to make their big move and set in train the massive logistical apparatus required and the preparation of the ground in Cuba.
- 10. What US reaction did the Soviets expect? In the first place, it must be assumed that Moscow expected that at some point the US would discover what was afoot -- probably before all the missiles were operational. (In view of the probable operation date of the IRBMs sometime in December it must be assumed as virtually certain that Moscow expected to be discovered well before the entire force was ready, although the Soviets of course would have preferred to face the US with an accomplished fact.)
- 11. Once discovered, the Soviets probably calculated that four broad US responses would occur:
- -- (a) protest, complaints in the UN but, finally acquiescence;
- -- (b) an effort to offer an attrictive bargain involving parts of the US overseas base structure;
- -- (c) application of major force against the missiles and/or Cuba as a whole.
- 12. (a) and (b) above almost certainly the responses considered most likely by the Soviets. Had they thought either (c) or (d) probable it would seem extremely doubtful that they would have undertaken the venture in the first place because (taking response (d)) they must have recognized that they could neither militarily preserve Cuba or the missile sites against massive US attack, nor keep open the sea and air lanes in the face of a US blockade, nor fight a general war and hope to win. It has sometimes been suggested that the Soviets would have been willing to trade Cuba for the obloquy which the US would earn were it to invade and crush Cuba. In an extreme case, the Soviets might find it necessary to accept such a trade; but they

would hardly base a course of action on the <u>expectation</u>. To the Soviets, at any rate, territory remains a more valuable asset than someone else's bad reputation. And it is extremely doubtful (taking response (c)) that the Soviets would have taken the trouble and risk of placing missiles in Cuba had they thought the most <u>likely</u> outcome was that they would have to pull them out again for slight compensation.

13. <u>Summation</u>. Born is the first instance of military-strategic considerations, the missile move into Cuba offered to the Soviets glittering prospects in the strategic, political and psychological realms and at least a postponement of new and repugnant economic decisions. They probably thought they could get away with the action or at least be able to trade the missiles for substantial portion of the Western military position. They probably considered less favorable outcomes and must always have been clear that they could win neither local nor general military action. But they evidently thought that such extremities would not have to be faced — and they miscalculated.